

Opening Statement of Senator John McCain at the Hearing on Marketing Violence Toward Children

Let me begin by thanking my good friend and colleague Senator Brownback. As most of you know, Senator Brownback has been concerned about the effects of violent media upon our nation's children for quite a while. I appreciate his efforts to focus the committee's attention on this matter.

Unfortunately, the problem which we as a nation must address is larger than the title of this hearing, "Marketing Violence Toward Children." The deeper problem is the failure of the family. As a country, we are not parenting our children. We are not involved in our children's lives. We are not putting them first. In the absence of parental guidance a rising culture of violence is engulfing our children.

This is an extraordinarily complex problem, with many contributing factors. It is not simply video games, music, movies or access to guns. Instead, it is all of these factors plus many others which combine to create a deadly mixture which feeds a culture of violence.

The Internet is another factor. The Internet can be a wonderful tool. It can open a world of opportunity and education to young children. Unfortunately, it can also open the door to hate groups and educate children about how to build explosive devices. The proliferation of hate groups and do-it-yourself bomb-making sites is making the Internet a dangerous place for young minds. We must make a greater effort to empower parents to shield their children from such material.

I would also remind everyone that this is not a new problem. It has only recently expanded to the suburbs and rural America. The problem of children killing children has been afflicting our nation's inner cities for years. Just like the fabled canary in a coal mine, inner cities were signaling a deep and dark problem in our nation's youth. Unfortunately, our institutions failed to hear that signal. We failed to adequately respond. Instead of getting better, the problem has gotten worse.

Again, thank you Senator Brownback for chairing this hearing. I look forward to hearing the testimony of the witnesses.